

At this moment, my mind is awash with memories and images; for example, in 1997, standing with Carl before a crowd of 50,000 pro-democratic Serbians in Belgrade, calling for a democracy to replace the dictator, Milosevic. It was a moving moment. In 2003, visiting our troops in Iraq—one of the first codels to enter Iraq—to find out for ourselves what was happening; what the troops needed; what we could do to protect them and give them the tools to do their job; and in 2009, crowded together, sitting on the floor on carpets with Afghan leaders in a small village, trying to determine a path forward. Carl always led by example and with decency and integrity.

Later this summer, it will be the honor of my life to speak at the commissioning of the U.S. Navy's newest warship, the USS Carl M. Levin. It is a great and formidable ship, bearing the name of a great and formidable man. I wish more than anything that Carl could be there to witness the tremendous honor for his namesake ship's commissioning. But Carl always did prefer to avoid the spotlight and the fanfare, and, I think, perhaps he will be smiling even wider as he looks from above at the christening of that ship.

Carl's life was defined by service, and we should all be grateful to be part of the legacy that he created in this very Chamber. His loss is immeasurable, but I am grateful for his lifetime of contributions to the people of Michigan and the people of our Nation.

We can best honor Senator Levin by carrying out his ideals and example in what we do here and what we do for the Nation, and, particularly, what we do for the brave young men and women who serve this Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise today to add my voice to my colleagues in remembering and paying our respects to our dear friend and former colleague Senator Carl Levin, whom we sadly lost last night.

My colleagues have been sharing their stories and their experiences of this incredible human being, this amazing Senator, and I want to share one of my own, a story of how he made an impact on my life and my approach to being a Senator.

It was back in 2009, when we had an enormous collapse of our economic system. I came here as a freshman Senator, and we were working to say what happened and how can we prevent this from happening again. A lot of what happened was enormously leveraged bets made in the Wall Street casino. A staff member of mine kept saying, you have got to read this essay by Chairman Volcker about how we take and shut down this Wall Street casino and how it puts our entire economy at risk and will do so again in the future again if we don't act.

After two or three times that my team member had approached me on

this, I put out an email to all of the Senators and said: Here is the challenge that is presented, and here is what we need to do to protect the future economy. Would anyone join me in undertaking to establish this Volcker rule to shut down the Wall Street casino?

The next day, I came to the floor of the Senate, and Carl Levin comes up to me. And he says: About your email from yesterday, about your email, I want to join you in that project.

He knew a lot about this issue, and he had staff members who knew a lot about this issue. Then he went on to say: And you may think because you are new and I have been here for a while that I am going to sweep in and take this over. He said: But I want to tell you, I am not going to do that. I don't want to do that. I want to work in full partnership with you, together.

And that is what it became, this full partnership: our team members working closely together, Carl and I working closely together, no one leading, if you will, or, to put it differently, leading together. And it had many, many chapters in this effort.

It was not an easy path to say the big banks needed to change how they operate. But what struck me in how he conducted himself was he expressed not egoism but altruism. He didn't focus on what he should do to advance himself politically; he wanted to know what we can do to serve the best interests of this Nation, not grandstanding but problem-solving to make the United States of America work better for everyone. And so we proceeded.

During the debate on Dodd-Frank, we had an opportunity to put forward an amendment to establish the Volcker rule. Colleagues across the aisle were none too happy about that, and it shut down the Senate for a full day. So Carl and I kept working during that day to say: No, this should be debated. This should be voted on. But eventually, our second-degree amendment died when the first-degree amendment was taken down. But our team members had worked through the night to make it a germane amendment so it would have survived had that not taken place.

So then we went, in partnership, over to speak with Mr. Frank, Congressman Frank on the House side. And Congressman Frank joined in the battle. And we kept pushing, and eventually, in conference, the Volcker rule was brought to life.

And then we started partnering and trying to prevent the rulemaking from tearing it down. And Carl would call me up and say: Here is what is happening. What are we going to do? And we would write a letter and we would call the regulators and we would rally our fellow Senators. He just kept at it. Like a dog with a bone, he was not going to let go. He was tenacious, saying: This matters. Every piece of it matters. We are going to get this done.

So when we think about the fact that that Wall Street casino no longer

threatens the American economy because it no longer operates as it did, well, we have Senator Carl Levin to thank for that.

There is so much more he did here. Colleagues have been speaking to other chapters of his work, but this was the chapter I was involved in. I think it said so much about who he was. His policy expertise, his humble approach to the fight, his willingness to take on powerful actors, that is truly what it is to be a public servant.

I wish Carl were here so we could have him hear these stories from us directly. I am thinking now about his colleagues representing Michigan who have followed in his footsteps. They are here: DEBBIE STABENOW, GARY PETERS. I know they are inspired by the example he set.

A couple of years ago, I had a chance to debate in Michigan and called up Carl so we could get together for dinner, together with his wife Barbara. And, boy, he was just interested in every aspect of what we were doing here and how we were, hopefully, making the Senate work better.

And just not so long ago, he wrote an op-ed about how to make the Senate work better by enabling the minority to slow things down, to have leverage but keep this body from being paralyzed. So he continued to think and to engage right up to his final days.

So, Barbara, we are thinking about you. We are holding you and your family in the light, and we are doing so with such appreciation of the life and work of Carl Levin.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I, of course, join my colleagues in their fond words for Carl Levin.

He was a mentor to me, like so many. And I am looking forward to speaking about him as well as my good friend Senator Enzi, whom we also tragically lost this past week, in the coming days.

But, today, I am focused on another topic, and that is the Olympics.

TRIBUTE TO SUNISA LEE

Madam President, I rise today to congratulate and honor Minnesota's own Sunisa Lee, who won the gold medal in the women's all-around gymnastics event at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

I got up, like many Minnesotans, at 5 in the morning to watch this live, and it was a sight to behold.

Suni hails from St. Paul. The youngest member of the U.S. women's gymnastics team at just 18, she has been competing on the national and international stages since 2015. She is now officially the best women's gymnast in the world.

Suni Lee's journey is a remarkable one. She faced incredible challenges to compete on the world's stage, including training through the coronavirus pandemic, breaking her foot, and sadly experiencing tragedies within her family

when she lost two relatives to COVID and when a 2019 accident left her father paralyzed.

On Thursday, July 29, 2021, she led the American team's quest for gold in the women's all-around gymnastics event after the legendary Simone Biles withdrew. But Simone Biles stayed and was there for her teammate and was there in the stands. But with the pressure of the world upon her, Suni Lee, who never thought she would be leading that team, who never thought that this honor would be hers, gave the performance of her life.

Suni's difficult and daring uneven bars routine sealed her victory. The routine set a 6.8 difficulty mark and earned a score of 15.3, tied for the highest score by any gymnast in the competition. She defended the American title in the women's all-around gymnastics event, marking the fifth consecutive Olympic win for an American.

She also contributed to the U.S. women's gymnastics team's silver medal performance in the team competition. She is a teamplayer and a role model for young men and women around the Nation.

Suni's entire family contributed to her success. And for many of us who watched, we saw them all in that room, cheering her on.

Her family, back in time, fled terror and violence in their native country of Laos to create a better life for their children. Her father John Lee built Suni a wooden balance beam in their backyard when she was a child because they could not afford to buy one.

As she said after her championship performance, "We both worked for this. [My father] sacrificed everything to put me in gymnastics."

Suni Lee represented the best of America on the world stage.

Minnesota, as my colleague TINA SMITH will share with you soon, is home to more than 81,000 Hmong Americans, the largest urban concentration in the United States. Suni's family, like many, arrived in America in the aftermath of the Vietnam war seeking a better life.

Suni is the first Hmong American to make the U.S. Olympic team and the first to win an Olympic Gold Medal. She is the first Asian American to win the women's all-around gymnastics competition. Her accomplishments represent the resiliency of her community and are an inspiration to Hmong Americans and all of us. They also represent her own personal resilience to be able to shine in that moment with such grace under pressure. Truly, she has captured the hearts of Minnesotans and people around the world.

Suni Lee's win is a remarkable achievement. I am pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate her; her coach, Jess Graba; her parents, John Lee and Yeev Thoj; and her entire extended family. I wish her continued success throughout her gymnastics career and beyond, and we can't wait to welcome her home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I am just delighted to be here today on the floor of the U.S. Senate with my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Sunisa Lee of St. Paul, MN, who won Olympic Gold in the individual all-around event in women's gymnastics in Tokyo this week.

Suni gave a historic performance while under immense personal pressure and under the difficult circumstances that have defined the 2021 Olympic Games. But she stepped up, and she gave an astounding performance to bring home gold, continuing the American tradition of excellence in women's gymnastics. Her routine on the uneven bars, as Senator KLOBUCHAR said, one of the most difficult ever attempted in women's gymnastics, was just stunning.

On her way to Olympic Gold, Suni faced really tremendous obstacles. After beginning her gymnastics training at age 6, Suni showed incredible dedication, focus, and drive to reach the elite levels of her sport despite injuries and personal challenges.

In 2019, her father was paralyzed in an accident but continued supporting his daughter's gymnastics career. And while continuing her training during the coronavirus pandemic, Suni suffered a broken foot, an Achilles tendon injury, and the tragic loss of her aunt and uncle to coronavirus.

While pandemic precautions meant there were no spectators to cheer her on in Tokyo, Suni's family, friends, community members, and gymnastics fans all over the country got together to cheer her on from afar with watch parties held in her honor. The videos of these gatherings show the incredible shared joy and pride in her incredible accomplishment, and I am sure that she could feel all that love and support as she competed in Tokyo.

Not only is Suni the youngest member of the U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team, but she is also the first Hmong American on the U.S. Olympic team and now is the first Asian American to be the Olympic women's all-around champion.

Her leadership and sportsmanship are an inspiration, and Minnesota is so proud to call her one of our own. In fact, Minnesota's Governor, Tim Walz, and St. Paul's mayor, Melvin Carter, have announced that today, Friday, July 30, 2021, is "Sunisa Lee Day." It is too bad that Ms. KLOBUCHAR and I can't be there to help them celebrate in St. Paul.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate those who contributed to Suni's victory: her parents, John Lee and Yeev Thoj, and her coach, Jess Graba. After Suni won her gold, she reminded us all that no one achieves success alone as she said, "This is my family's medal, my medal. My coach's medal."

Madam President, in this moment, I also would like to take an opportunity to acknowledge the awe-inspiring leadership of Simone Biles. Her choice to withdraw from the all-around event in order to protect her health and safety was courageous and is an important reminder that mental health is an essential part of our overall well-being.

In addition to being the greatest of all time, Simone's powerful advocacy and her unwavering support for Suni and the rest of her team show that she is also a great team player and an activist.

Every Olympic medal represents untold hours of hard work and struggle and resilience, and Suni Lee's all-around gold is no exception.

So congratulations to Suni. We are all so proud of you. Thank you for your courage, your dedication, and your inspiration to all of us everywhere in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

CHILD TAX CREDIT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, with the Presiding Officer's help, and the help of 48 others—48 others in this body, we provided back in March an amendment; and then in final passage, we provided the biggest tax cut—the largest tax cut for working families ever.

It is called the Child Tax Credit. It has been several years in the making. We didn't make so much progress the last 4 years, but an election and a new President, coupled with a new U.S. Senate, has made all the difference in the world.

In my State, 2.4 million children are eligible. And 2.1 million of those—I will get to that in a moment; we haven't reached everybody yet. But 2.1 million saw last week in the mail—in their mailbox or direct deposits in their bank accounts—2.1 million children were the beneficiary of \$250 or \$300 last week.

So every month—July 15, coming up August 15, September 15, October 15, children from zero to 5, their parents will get \$300 each of those months. If their children are 6 to 17, those families will get \$250 per child. Almost every child—92 percent of children in Ohio, roughly the same; 9 out of 10 in the State of Wisconsin, the Presiding Officer's State, will be getting—their families will be getting checks in the mail—these checks in the mail.

In sort of a macro big way, we know this does a number of things. First of all, it drops the poverty rate among America's children by almost 50 percent. Imagine that. One bill we do drops the poverty rate among children in this country by 50 percent, something government has never been able to do. And because of this Child Tax Credit, the largest tax cut for working families in American history, it will make a huge difference.

In another macro sort of way, the people of Wisconsin and Ohio and other